



505 WATCHOGUE ROAD \* STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. 10314 \* (718) 981-3151

---

March 17, 2020

Dear Beloved Community of Zion,

**“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”**

*Psalm 46:1*

We continue the tradition with those around us that calls us to love our neighbor and to care for those who are most vulnerable among us. It is out of that love and care that Zion will continue to follow the recommendation of our Metro New York Synod bishop, Paul Egensteiner, and suspend gathering for worship another two weeks, on Sunday, March 22, and 29, 2020.

What does this mean? Once again there will be no public worship (8:15 or 10:30 a.m.) held at Zion on the next two Sundays, no Sunday School or First Communion class, and no Soup Supper on Wednesdays or programming including bible study and confirmation classes. We will continue to evaluate week to week as information comes in concerning the Coronavirus (COVID-19) about being open for worship in the coming weeks and if there is a change for the better, we will let you know about re-opening. For the First Communion students, our target of the Easter Sunday celebration of First Communion is still being kept, as we will work in the coming weeks to make sure that you receive your instruction.

Whereas people of faith we have courage in the face of crisis because of God’s love and mercy, we also are called to love one another, and this is the greatest commandment. We are, as a community of faith, called to encourage one another and allow our faith to bring calm in the midst of anxiety. With that, let us not be idle at this time, but pray for all those directly impacted by the COVID-19 virus, for those who have the virus, those who mourn the loss of loved ones, for health care workers, first responders, and care providers. Let us continue to care for one another, especially our shut-ins, those who are ill, those who live with food scarcity, or are in need of supplies that are not readily accessible to them.

**As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.**

*Colossians 3: 12-15*

If you know someone who is need please contact the Church Office or Pastor John. I was encouraged by the Zion people who have reached out to volunteer to help anyone in need. It is a testament to the community’s faith. We will be working on having people available to deliver if and when a need arises.

What a glorious day it will be when we will come together to worship our Lord in person. I look forward to being reunited with all of you in the weeks ahead. I will be at the Church on Sunday mornings in case there are people who have not received this message. For those of you reading this, please remain faithful, prayerful, and take advantage of the time with your beloved family.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to call me directly at the Church or on my cell phone.

Yours in Christ,

*Pr. John Saraka*